



St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Department

Update

Phase 1, #2

Fall 1998

www.stcharlessheriff.org

A BIENNIAL PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO REPORTING THE NEWEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ST. CHARLES SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Postal Patron

This is a free publication mailed to St. Charles Parish residents, law enforcement professionals, community organization representatives, civic leaders and government officials. If you are not on the mailing list and would like to receive future issues, please write or fax your request to the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Department.



**SHERIFF GREG
CHAMPAGNE**

Welcome to the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Department's second issue of *Update*. In it we strive to keep local residents aware of the many advancements within the department. At the same time, we want to bridge the distance between the community and law enforcement providers, facilitating the exchange of information and giving a voice to all involved in the community policing process.

This issue explores advances we've made over the last two years in four major areas — **policing strategies, community partnerships, technology and initiatives to keeping our community safe.**

1.

Team effort impacting crime locally

Two years ago, when I took the oath of office, I promised that, together, we could effectively fight crime. While many significant steps have been taken, there is much more we need to do in order to maintain the quality of life in St. Charles Parish for years to come.

It is impossible to credit any one effort — we've implemented a number of programs targeted at all ages, upgraded training and benefits for our workforce, and concentrated enforcement on key areas.

This network approach appears to be paying off.

We have seen the crime rate fall five of the last six quarters. However, keeping our crime rate low is becoming more challenging with a lack of adequate jail space.

We recently unveiled a plan to build a new jail without additional taxes.

Over the last two years, we have escalated the fight against the drug trade by adding more detectives to the narcotics unit. In early August, the department recorded its largest drug bust in the parish's history. And in recent months, large scale traffickers have been arrested and sent to prison.

The message to violent offenders, drug dealers and users is clear — St. Charles Parish will not tolerate this activity.

It is also a fact that arresting street-level dealers and drug users impacts all types of crime. A large number of burglaries and thefts are perpetrated by criminals intent on supporting their drug habits.

Our commitment to keeping violent offenders off our streets — despite our limited jail space — remains the department's chief goal.

To effectively fight and, more importantly, prevent crime, we must begin early. We've taken our message to the schools with our D.A.R.E. and Safe Schools pro-

grams and doubled the number of deputies teaching drug and violence prevention to our young people.

Teens are also learning first-hand what skills are required to be a deputy in our Explorer Post. By reaching our future work

develop programs to protect our elderly population. "File of Life" packets, which provide detailed medical information, have been mailed in record numbers.

Also, our "Operation Quick Response," which entails painting house numbers so service providers can quickly find a home, continues to receive requests daily.

In response to citizens' concerns regarding traffic problems in their neighborhoods, the department's Traffic Division has been expanded. We've also enlisted the aid of radar trailers, which help us identify problem streets for patrols.

Similarly, our Marine Division has stepped up patrols on the parish's waterways.

In keeping with our commitment to provide citizens' with the best educated, highest trained police force, we've enhanced our Training Division. Our officers get hands-on instruction ranging from investigating crimes to defense tactics.

As was evidenced at this summer's National Night Out Against Crime, St. Charles

Parish residents are staking claim to their neighborhoods. As the life-blood of all community policing efforts, your ongoing support and participation is essential to suppressing crime. Programs such as Neighborhood Watch offer an effective means to lessen the likelihood of you or your neighbors becoming victims.

In restating our commitment, we reissue the challenge to you, the citizens and taxpayers of this great parish, to get involved. This effort, teamed with good old-fashioned police work, can have a tremendous impact on suppressing crime on the streets of St. Charles Parish.



Sixty-six local boys attended Operation First Class Sheriff's Camp in Kiln, Miss. The camp is hosted by the Boy Scouts of America and is sponsored annually by regional sheriffs.

force early, the teens have an opportunity to determine if law enforcement is indeed a career for them and to choose appropriate preparatory classes.

In addition, over the summer, 66 St. Charles boys, ages 11-17, attended Operation First Class Sheriff's Camp, which stresses the value of honesty, integrity and leadership.

We believe our hard work is paying off. Young people are recognizing their part in preventing crime.

Special attention has also been paid to St. Charles Parish's senior citizens. Through Triad, we continue to identify needs and

Departmental Strategies

Stepped-up crime patrols reap results

July '96 - 263
Aug. '96 - 263
Sept. '96 - 216
Oct. '96 - 247
Nov. '96 - 247
Dec. '96 - 236
Jan. '97 - 246
Feb. '97 - 211
March '97 - 267
April '97 - 212
May '97 - 247
June '97 - 225
July '97 - 275
Aug. '97 - 215
Sept. '97 - 276
Oct. '97 - 230
Nov. '97 - 170
Dec. '97 - 202
Jan. '98 - 192
Feb. '98 - 198
March '98 - 203
April '98 - 215
May '98 - 257
June '98 - 296

A spike this summer in the parish's crime rate ended a five-quarter drop in crime since Sheriff Greg Champagne took office.

During June — the beginning of the summer break for school-age youngsters — the number of reported incidents increased. Thefts accounted for the largest single category increase.

"Ninety-nine percent of our school children are good kids," the sheriff said, "but, unfortunately, some of them are out there committing crimes."

The Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) track murders, assaults, rapes, robberies, burglaries, auto thefts and thefts in general. The Federal Bureau of Investigations compiles data on a voluntary basis to determine the crime trends in America.

"I'm always concerned about increases, but I'm not overly

concerned," the sheriff said of the new UCR figures. Overall, since Champagne assumed the job as sheriff, the crime rate has dropped in spite of a steady increase in the parish's population.

Stepped-up patrols, aggressive programs promoting awareness and greater citizen involvement are credited for the majority of arrests.

In recent months, specialized task forces have focused on curfew violations, burglary and theft rings, speeding in neighborhoods and drug trafficking.

"We've dramatically increased the number of narcotics and patrol people we have out there, and we're starting to see that pay off," Sheriff Champagne said. "Anytime you can shut down dealers, you're also going to influence other crimes. When we fight narcotics, we're also fight-

ing the thefts and burglaries."

By taking a few common-sense measures, citizens can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a victim of a crime. By simply locking the doors of your car and house and keeping valuables out of sight when you leave, the incentive for a would-be robber to strike is lessened.

"People need to remain alert," Sheriff Champagne said. "Car phones and other valuables left in plain eye-sight are bait for criminals."

In the meantime, officers are attending neighborhood watch meetings and listening to citizens' concerns. Throughout the parish, deputy patrols are more visible.

"We're asking citizens to be a partner in fighting crime," Sheriff Champagne said. "If you see something out of the ordinary, call us."

Reassignments focus on jail expansion

Several key personnel within the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Department have been reassigned to focus energies on obtaining a new correctional facility and juvenile detention center in the parish.

The parish's 119-bed facility has been at capacity for a record number of months.

The following temporary reassignments were announced in May:

■ Major Sam Zinna serves as Jail Project Coordinator. As such, he handles the day-to-day coordination of this project. Zinna retains oversight of the department's federal grants and continues to be one of the department's 911 Commission representatives.

■ Cpt. Jonathan Walsdorf assumes the command of Communications, Records, Training, Data Processing, Purchasing/ Inventory and District Attorney's investigators.

■ Lt. Fred Oubre has assumed the command of the Patrol Division, the post formerly held by Walsdorf.

They will work with the jail construction committee, which includes Champagne, District Attorney Harry J. Morel Jr., Parish President Chris Tregre and three council members.

"Our deputies are doing the job of investigating and arresting criminals and judges are imposing tougher sentences," Sheriff Champagne said. "A new jail and juvenile facility is essential if we are going to keep these people off our streets."



Denise Francis:
1997 Deputy of
the Year

A 911 operator, Francis was able to yield needed information from a hysterical caller during an attempted armed robbery in Destrehan. Because of her professionalism, the three robbers were apprehended seconds after the incident.

Do you know where your kids are?

It's 10 p.m. and your children aren't home. Before you turn in for the night, consider this: you may be subject to a \$100 fine.

Children under the age of 17, unaccompanied by a parent or adult, are required by St. Charles Parish Ordinance No. 66-3-6 to be at home between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. The law allows for emergencies and chaperoned activities.

Violation of the curfew can result in a fine up to \$100 or 30 days in jail.

"Children have no business being on the streets after 10 p.m.," said Sheriff Greg Champagne. "We know that having young people out and about at that hour makes them more prone to criminal behavior — they may be on the violating or receiving end of that activity."

To ensure the safety of the parish's young set, the sheriff has formed a curfew task force.

Deputies have been patrolling the parish, picking up and returning children to their parents. Citations are also issued and parents are required to follow up with a juvenile officer within five days. If cause exists, the child could be arrested.

Sex offender law gets local push

Sex offenders take note: Administrative Assistant Jimmy Robert Sr. and Deputy James Eugene have been walking door-to-door in affected areas, making certain each offender has complied with every aspect of La. Revised Statute 15:542.

The law requires anyone who has plead guilty or has been convicted to a sex offense

to register with the sheriff, as well as to give notice to residents, businesses and schools within a one-mile radius of the offender's residence.

"If a sex offender moves into your neighborhood, you have a right, and they have an obligation to provide this information," Sheriff Champagne said. "I want to make certain you know who

resides in your neighborhood."

Thirty-six offenders have registered in St. Charles Parish since the law was enacted in 1994. Of these, 24 still live in the parish.

Questions concerning the law or sex offenders living in your neighborhood may be directed to Jimmy Robert at 783-1355.

Departmental Profile

Overcrowded jail remains a challenge for sheriff

For the last few years, Capt. Roland Ladreyt's day has been quite predictable.

"Every day I comb the prisoner list and ask, 'Who can we get out of here today?'" said Ladreyt, who serves as the warden of the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Department's jail.

The facility has operated at capacity since Sheriff Greg Champagne assumed the job as the parish's top lawman two years ago. Statewide, parishes are faced with similar situations — too many offenders, not enough jail space.

"We've had to get creative with our law enforcement efforts," Sheriff Champagne said. "On one hand, we're aggressively enforcing the law; on the other, we're constantly faced with the reminder that our jail is operating at capacity."

To offset the overcrowding, the sheriff's department turns to neighboring parishes for help.

At a cost of \$22 per day, prisoners are housed at the St. John the Baptist Parish Correctional Facility. A daily average of 10 inmates are kept there when space allows, Ladreyt said.

Jefferson and Orleans parishes have also been able to accept some of the overflow when they are not at capacity.

And, as a last resort, non-violent offenders who have served most of their time are released to make room for more threatening prisoners.

"Finding enough space to house inmates has been the main focus for so long now," Ladreyt said. "Our mission has shifted from being a correctional facility to safely housing prisoners."

Inmates spend their days sleeping, talking or playing cards. Three times a week, weather permitting, prisoners are escorted to the exercise yard.

"It's a scheduling nightmare," Ladreyt said, "because we can't have too many inmates out there at once, plus you have to be aware of who is an enemy of someone else. We also have to stay at peak staffing to patrol this many prisoners."

Extra inmates sleep on make-shift beds — a cot mattress and blanket — on the floors of several tiers, and for short periods, holding cells are converted to house the overflow.

"Because of the lack of space, we're issuing more and more summonses for offenders to appear in court," Sheriff Champagne said. "We save the few beds for the more serious criminals."



With only 119 beds, makeshift mats are set up on the floors of cells at the St. Charles Parish Correctional Facility. To pass their time, prisoners attend church services (below), and non-violent offenders volunteer for trash pickup details.

For those who want it, the prison provides GED classes, AA meetings once a week and religious services three days a week.

"We do all we can to provide rehabilitation services, as limited or as infrequent as they are," Ladreyt said.

To break the monotony of the day, non-violent offenders are assigned to daily trash details.

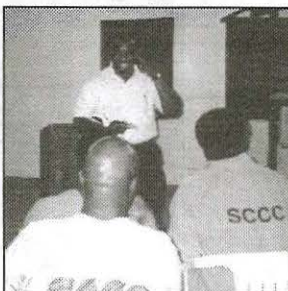
"Trustees work details from 4:35 a.m. to 10 p.m.," Ladreyt said. For the work, they receive no pay or reduction of their sentence. "They do it just to relieve the boredom and to make their time go faster."

In years past, inmates would often feign illness and request a trip to the doctor or emergency room. The trips proved quite costly since a deputy usually had to report for duty to escort the inmate.

To cut down on the abuse of this privilege, Sheriff Champagne instituted a pay-back system. Inmates are charged \$4-\$20, depending on what type of medical service is needed.

"When we started charging them from their soft drink and cigarette money, the abuses dropped almost immediately," the sheriff said.

Because space is such a premium, GED



classes and religious services are held in the outer kitchen area. At big-draw services, inmates are moved to the exercise yard.

"This plant really isn't designed for rehabilitating prisoners," Ladreyt said. "If we did have an inmate looking for life-changing skills or training to help him or her get a job once he gets out, we can't do it. We don't have the room or the equipment."

In recent months, the bed shortage has also hindered narcotics efforts.

A drug raid was postponed for almost two months as Sheriff Champagne shifted inmates to create more space.

"Obviously we're not going to put someone who's a danger to our community back on the streets," the sheriff said, "but officers are having to use a little more discretion as to who is arrested. When we only have a few beds available, it inevitably creates problems as to who we are going to put in that bed."

Preaching the Word of God

God called and the Rev. Gary Bolden answered.

The parish prison chaplain and his staff of more than 50 clergy are literally changing lives with the Gospel of God.

Bolden organizes religious services from virtually every denomination, which are offered to prisoners and correctional officers three times a week.

"We have one basic philosophy," Bolden said. "If you want help, we'll give it to you."

Bibles, religious books and newspapers and videos are made available upon request as well.

Upon release, ministers make follow-up visits, challenging inmates to stay true to the vows they made while in prison.

"While they are in jail, we give prisoners a chance to talk about whatever is on their hearts," Bolden said. "Then we show them what the Bible says about it. God has forgiven them, but if they do the crime, they have to do the time."

Jail population from 1990-97

Year	Arrests	Peek
1990	2,632	124
1991	2,600	126
1992	3,613	109
1993	3,014	121
1994	2,961	116
1995	2,516	120
1995	2,516	120
1996	2,888	101
1997	3,777	120
1998	2,652 (thru Aug. 11)	

Community Partnerships

Explorer Post #15 gives teens a hands-on feel for cop's job

High school students interested in a career in law enforcement are getting a head start through Explorers.

Explorer Post #15, which was developed by Sheriff Greg Champagne, gives interested students, ages 14-21, a chance to learn more about the field.

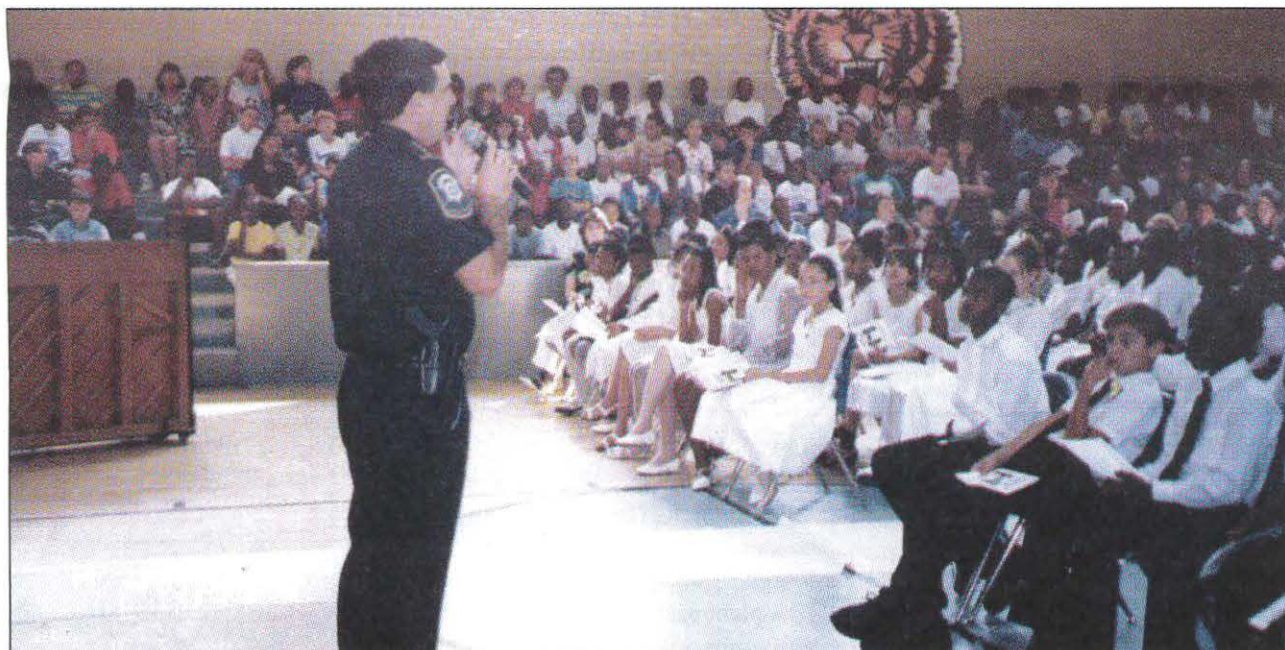
"It's a way of letting teens decide early enough in their lives if this is a career for them and, if so, to make wiser academic decisions as early as high school," Champagne said.

The parish's 24 Explorers recently participated in the Sheriff's

Summer Camp, Operation Quick Response and competed at the first annual Metro Area Council Law Enforcement Conference.

Post #15 meets at 7 p.m. the first Thursday of each month at the Fraternal Order of Police Hall in Destrehan.

For more information, contact Cpl. Burley McCarter or Sgt. Ardine Boyd at 783-1355.



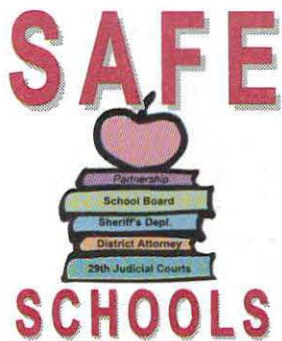
D.A.R.E. youngsters to say "No"

Well over 5,000 fifth and sixth graders have successfully completed the St. Charles Sheriff's Department's D.A.R.E. program.

Implemented in 1989, the program is designed to teach youngsters the skills needed to lead a drug-free life. The department's program was only the second such program to be instituted in Louisiana.

The sheriff's department employs three full-time D.A.R.E. officers, who travel to schools throughout the parish.

Sheriff Greg Champagne is pictured at left speaking to students at Carver Elementary School's D.A.R.E. graduation.



4.

A.D.A.P.T. takes the fun out of being suspended

In years past, a school suspension was a pass to roam the streets of St. Charles Parish by day.

Now, when a student violates the Safe Schools Policy or is suspended, he or she must go to the head of the class — the A.D.A.P.T. class.

An acronym for Alternative Discipline: A Positive Turnaround, A.D.A.P.T. provides a very structured, controlled setting in a respectful atmosphere. Students must adhere to strict dress codes and class rules.

In addition to providing direction and

assistance with regular school work, A.D.A.P.T. teachers monitor supplemental assignments. Students are also required to participate in sessions with A.D.A.P.T. counselors as requested.

Students participate in daily exercise, drill and marching sessions. A student's stay can range from 3-9 days, depending on how many times he or she has been suspended before.

To exit the program, the student must successfully complete all A.D.A.P.T. components. He or she is then allowed to re-

enter the regular classroom.

"The same students who were sent home for causing problems in schools were being picked up by our deputies for causing problems," said Sheriff Greg Champagne, who has assigned two full-time resource officers to this program. "These same students are the ones who need more structure in their lives and they need to be in school. A.D.A.P.T. ensures all of our students have a chance to get an education in a safe environment."



Sheriff Greg Champagne is pictured with members of the Madere family and representatives of the St. Charles Council on the Prevention of Child Abuse.

Donation to serve area's abused children

Sheriff Greg Champagne recently unveiled the Sheriff's Department's plans to renovate a building in Luling to house the St. Charles Council on the Prevention of Child Abuse. He is seeking grants to pay for the needed repairs.

The building, which was graciously donated to the sheriff's department by the daughters of the late John Madere, once housed the family-owned JLM clothing and shoe store. It is located on Paul Mallard Avenue in Boutte.

In addition to serving as headquarters of the child abuse agency, the building will be used by sheriff's department investigators interviewing possible victims of child abuse.

"We needed a place to interview children where the setting wasn't so intimidating," Sheriff Champagne said. "This building will get a new life and will serve a very important role in our community. We greatly appreciate the Madere's tribute to their father's memory."

Agency secretary JoAnn Walker said the building will house offices and will be the site for parenting classes. Currently, those classes are held at Destrehan and Hahnville high schools.

For more information on the St. Charles Council on the Prevention of Child Abuse, call Walker at 764-7942.

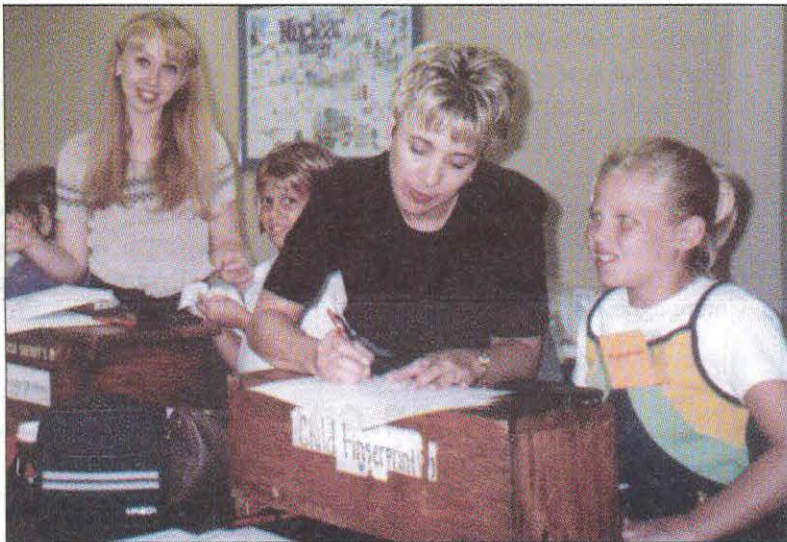
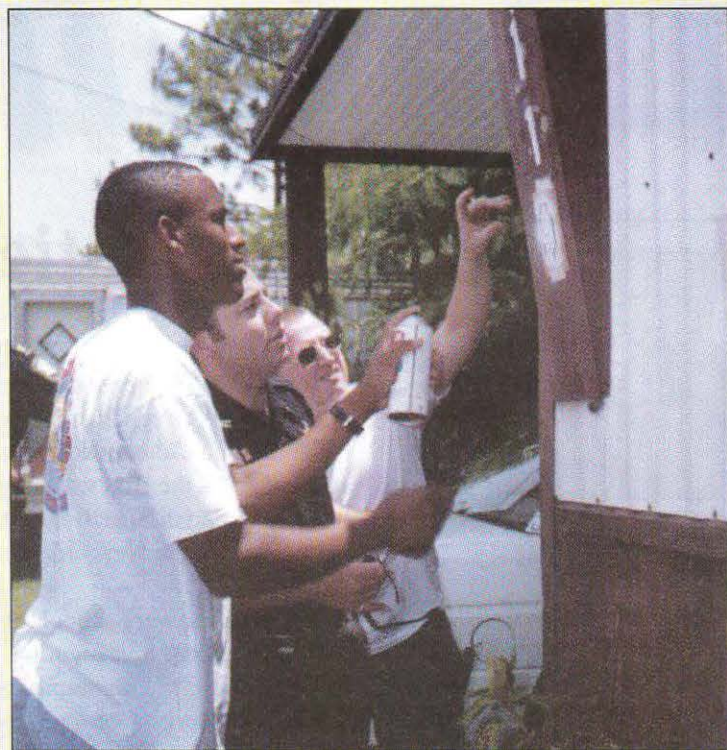
'Operation Quick Response' aids seniors

In an emergency, every second counts. There is no greater frustration for sheriff's deputies and EMTs than to be unable to find the homes of those who need help.

"Operation Quick Response" teams volunteers who paint numbers outside seniors' homes to aid in emergency situations. The community service project was sponsored by the St. Charles Parish Triad, Sheriff Greg Champagne, the parish's Council on Aging and the sheriff's Explorer Post #15.

House numbers are stenciled outside the house and near the end of the driveway.

The service is offered free of charge to seniors and needy residents of St. Charles Parish. For more information, contact Deputy Judy Lanson at 783-1355.



Fingerprints —

As a community service, the Special Services Division visited several sites throughout the summer fingerprinting youngsters. The prints, which are included in a packet, are given to parents to keep on file. Intern Molly Hannen and Deputy Susie Breau are pictured fingerprinting children at Waterford 3's summer science camp.

Violence Prevention Program yields 65% overall drop in school fights

Fights and suspensions at St. Charles Parish public schools have dropped 65% overall since the introduction of the Violence Prevention Program three years ago.

The program is the brainchild of the St. Charles Sheriff's Department, St. Charles Parish School Board, St. Charles Parish District Attorney's Office, and judges with the 29th Judicial District Court.

All four entities joined forces to aggressively target the increasing number of violent fights in the school system.

Under the program, students who fight at school are arrested. They are required to post a \$250 bond to be released.

Students can choose to avoid prosecution by participating in a diversionary program that addresses the need for conflict resolution training and teaches better communication and problem solving skills. Parents or guardians are required to also attend a portion of the sessions.

Those who successfully complete the pro-

gram are reimbursed \$150 of their bond. The remaining \$100 helps defray the cost of the violence prevention program.

The sheriff's department provides six full-time resource officers. The public school district's two high schools and four middle schools are each assigned an officer.

Resource officers utilize a triad concept in defining their role: they teach law-related courses, act as counselors, and perform their normal law enforcement duties.

"The results from the Violence Prevention Program has been tremendous," said Sheriff Greg Champagne. "Since the first moment we trotted this program out, we've seen the number of school fights drop."



All arms —

Youngsters at the parish's Parks & Recreation summer camp got some very important words of advice from sheriff's deputies. Resource and D.A.R.E. officers led classes in a variety of safety-oriented topics from gun safety to gang resistance to being home alone. At left, Deputy Jo Terluin and Sgt. Ardine Boyd show campers the proper hand signals for bike riders.

Departmental Training



Laptops the latest addition to the force

The addition of 50 Panasonic Pentium laptop computers to the St. Charles Sheriff's Department's front-line of defense has meant not only an upgrade in the quality of equipment, but the level of services as well.

"It's greatly enhanced the level of communication within the department and maximized the amount of time spent investigating complaints," said Capt. Jonathan Walsdorf, who heads the Communications and Records divisions.

Investigators and supervisors are able to access reports via computer. Time previously spent in the office writing reports is now spent simply typing the proper information into the corresponding blank.

The accuracy of reports has greatly been improved too. Deputies are also able to input witnesses' statements while in the field, thus often saving them a trip to the station.

"This (the addition of laptops) represents a big step for our department," Walsdorf said. "It brings us into the 1990s."

13 deputies graduate from police academy

Thirteen new recruits recently completed the law enforcement academy, according to Sheriff Greg Champagne.

The graduates attended two separate academies — the first was taught by the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Department, the second by the New Orleans Harbor Police.

The deputies were schooled in report writing, accident investigation, juvenile and criminal law, community policing, felony procedures and other law enforcement issues.

Among the deputies, Officers Troy Whitney and Derek Wininger received awards for top academic achievement while at the academies.

The new recruits will be assigned to either Patrol Operations or the Corrections Division.

"We are committed to hiring the best people to the force. We're excited about our newest recruits," said Sheriff Champagne.



New recruits pictured with Sheriff Greg Champagne are (back row, from left) Jay Landry, Denise Licciardi, Derek Wininger, Kevin Doyle, Carol Thibodeaux, Rene DeJean, (front row, from left) Orthello Carter, Troy Whitney, Tiffany Riley, Melissa Freitas and Wayne Augillard. Deputies Maureen LaRosse and Tommy Cummings are not pictured but are in this graduating class.

A-Z: Training an ongoing effort for parish's law officers

From the proper use of pepper spray to hand-to-hand defense tactics, the St. Charles Sheriff's Department is making certain deputies get the training they need.

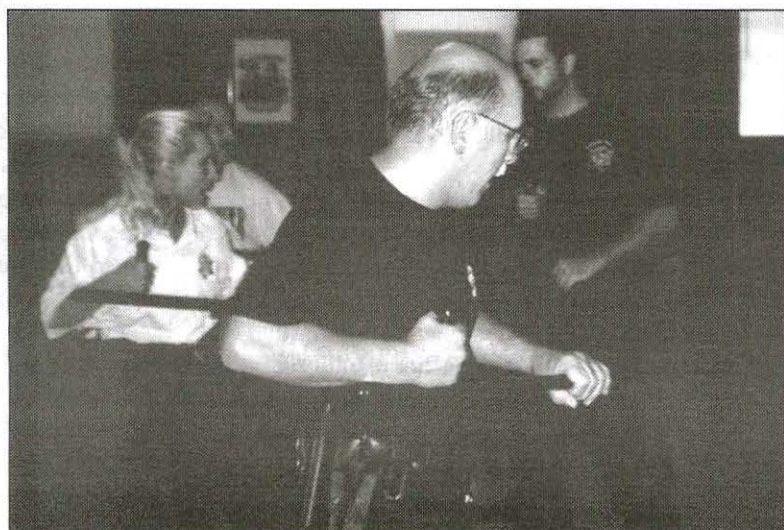
The department regularly provides in-service training programs for deputies, as well as reserve officers.

The Training Division's motto is: "Repetition builds retention;

retention builds skills; skills build confidence."

On-going programs include defensive tactics, tactical driving, report writing, FTO Program, firing range, CPR/First Aid, leadership programs and instructor development classes.

Reserve officer training, which lasts six months, focuses on the legal aspects of the job as well as the above classes.



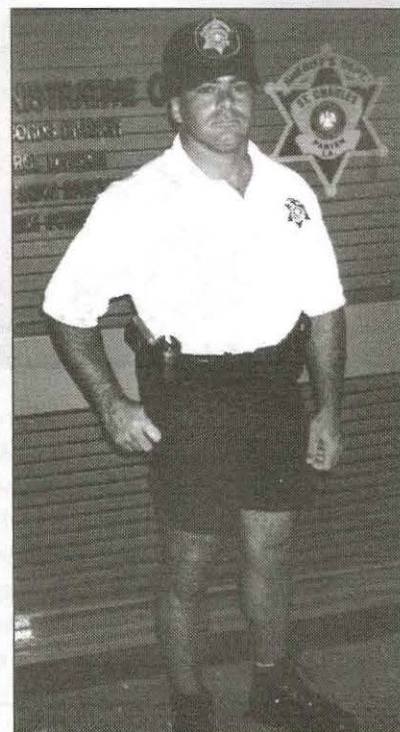
Deputies get a new look

St. Charles Parish deputies will shed their traditional "blues" for special events, opting for tropical uniforms instead.

The outfits, which include a light gray polo shirt embroidered with the sheriff's department logo, a baseball cap bearing the same, navy fatigue shorts, white athletic socks and black leather tennis shoes, should provide a break for deputies assigned to outdoor events during the hot summer months.

Officers who choose not to wear the shorts can wear alternate slacks and black tactical-style boots.

"Our sub-tropical climate was the impetus for offering deputies an alternative during the summer," said Sheriff Greg Champagne. "The new look is still professional looking, just not as hot." Watch for the uniforms at special events such as fairs and festivals.



Departmental Initiatives

Are you prepared for the "Big One"?

St. Charles Parish has skirted several close calls, but fortunately, has been spared the fury of a major hurricane for some time.

Last year, when Hurricane Danny threatened our shoreline, commercial fishermen took a beating. Before that, hurricane trackers would have to go back to 1985, when a succession of three storms — Hurricanes Danny, Elena and Juan — caused flooding in some areas of the parish.

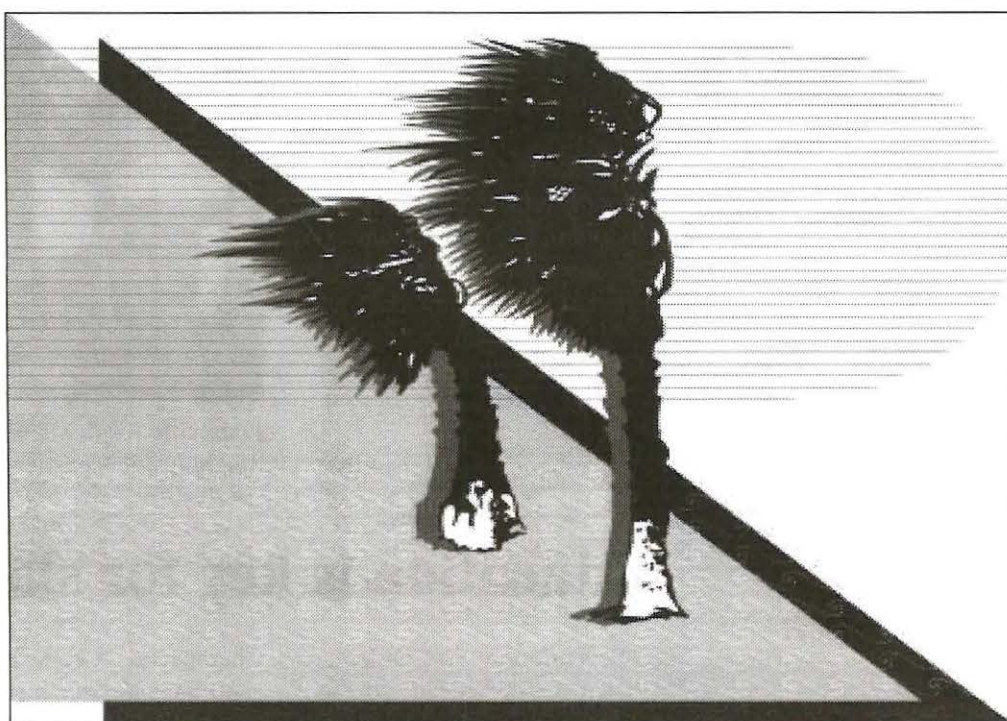
The tendency after so many close calls is to grow complacent when a storm's brewing. However, warns Sheriff Greg Champagne, it is better to be safe than sorry. Time spent preparing for a storm now can prevent a lot of stress later if a storm turns in our direction.

This year, six hurricanes — two of which will be major storms — are expected to hit landfall, according to William Gray, professor of atmospheric sciences at Colorado State University and the foremost authority on hurricane projections.

"Now's the time to gather your first aid and emergency supplies and prepare an evacuation plan," Champagne said. "The unpredictable nature of a hurricane can cut short the time you have to take care of these things later."

In preparing an evacuation route, it is important to note that the American Red Cross will not open "last resort shelters" in the area during any Category 3, 4 or 5 storm. The change was mandated because of the threat of a dangerous storm surge.

Residents will be asked instead to evacuate north of Interstate 10. (See "Where to Go" information below.)



For lesser storms, residents who utilize the Red Cross shelters will be responsible for providing for their own particular needs. No food or bedding will be available from the Red Cross during the first 24 hours a shelter is open.

Emergency information and instructions from federal, state and local authorities will be available locally on WWL AM 870 or WLMG FM 101.9. The Emergency Alert System will provide weather reports, road conditions, shelter locations and information on re-entering the area.

"The crucial thing to remember is that when people start evacuating the metropolitan New Orleans area, greater than 1/3 of all traffic will pass through the parish," Sheriff Champagne said. "Delays on the I-

310 interchange connecting to I-10 will be heavy.

"It's important to stay tuned to the radio or news and leave early when an evacuation is ordered," the sheriff said. "Stay calm and keep your cool in traffic."

It's best to fuel your car and check your spare tire as the storm first approaches. Also, be sure to take any special items needed for family members, as well as important documents such as insurance, mortgage and your household inventory.

Before leaving, turn off the electricity in your home at the main box. Be sure to lock your house. Also, let others know when you leave and where you are going.

Don't forget to make arrangements for your animals.

Action Checklist

Do you have:

- ☐ A plan in place to survive a disaster?
- ☐ A home and car emergency supply kit?
- ☐ Updated homeowner's and flood insurance?
- ☐ A plan for turning off your utilities?
- ☐ Copies of your insurance policies, important documents and other valuables in a safe place?
- ☐ An inventory and detailed description of your property?
- ☐ A storm-ready roof, which has been inspected within the last six months?
- ☐ Well-maintained trees and shrubs around your house?
- ☐ A car in good running condition, including the tires and the spare?
- ☐ An up-to-date emergency phone list?
- ☐ Complete arrangements for your out-of-state communication contact?
- ☐ A plan to address the "special needs" family members?
- ☐ A place to house your pets or animals?
- ☐ A recovery plan?
- ☐ A sound education and involvement in community preparedness?
- ☐ Money for the additional expense to prepare your home, buy supplies and evacuate?

For more hurricane information, pick up your copy of "Surviving the Storm." Copies are available at the St. Charles Red Cross in Luling or at any Whitney Bank.

7.



Would
you know
what to
do?

When to Leave

• Has a hurricane watch or warning been posted?

A hurricane watch is issued 36 hours ahead of a storm's possible arrival. A warning denotes residents of an area can expect the storm to hit within 24 hours.

It's best to make evacuation reservations when a warning is issued.



Where to Go

• East Bank resident:

Evacuate north following US 61 to the I-10 and I-55 interchanges, taking I-55 through Hammond.

• West Bank resident:

Those living east of the Hale Boggs Bridge should take I-310 to I-10, then west to Baton Rouge. Those west of the bridge should take LA18 or LA 3127 to the Veterans Bridge or Sunshine Bridge then to Baton Rouge via US 61 or I-10.

Last Resort Shelters

• In case of an evacuation...

All residents are urged to heed evacuation orders. Seek shelter with family or friends north of I-10, or go to a certified American Red Cross public shelter.

"Last resort shelters" will be opened only for Category 1-2 storms. Those who choose to stay there will be responsible for providing their own food and bedding for at least the first 24 hours.

Record Drug Bust



Sheriff Greg Champagne, who is flanked by Chief Joe Cardella (at left), Major John Cornwell and Capt. Al Theriot Jr., displays some of the record 117 pounds of marijuana — the largest seizure in parish history — recently confiscated following a traffic stop on Interstate 10. Charles A. Neuman, of Metairie, and Steven M. Romskey, of New Orleans, were arrested and charged with possession of more than 60 pounds of marijuana with intent to distribute and illegally carrying weapons. Deputies uncovered a loaded Smith & Wesson .40-caliber semi-automatic and \$500 cash in addition to three drug-filled duffel bags from the trunk of their 1990 Nissan Maxima. Sheriff Champagne estimated the street value of the marijuana to be \$150,000.

Start a Neighborhood Watch in your community

Neighbors watching neighbors, that's the premise behind the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Department's Neighborhood Watch.

Designed to increase citizens' awareness, the Neighborhood Watch program teaches techniques for securing your property, assists with marking your possessions, and provides information on protecting homes and families in your community.

To start a Neighborhood Watch program in your area, talk to your neighbors and set up a meeting date, time and location. Then call Lt. Dwayne LeGrange in the Special Services Division at 783-1355. Deputies will work with your group to aid in getting your program under way.

Residents fight back against crime

St. Charles Parish residents reclaimed their streets Aug. 4 at the 15th annual Night Out Against Crime/Drug Prevention event.

Part of a nationwide push, an estimated 27 million people participated in National Night Out. The event is sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch and is co-sponsored locally by the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Department.

National Night Out is designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness; general support and participation in local anti-crime efforts; strengthen neighborhood spirit and police community relations; and send a message to criminals letting them know neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

Neighborhoods joined the

festivities — themed "Give Neighborhood Crime and Drugs and Going Away Party" — by holding barbecues, small rallies and other events.

"National Night Out serves as a great reminder of the

power people have when they keep an eye out for and report suspicious activities in their neighborhoods," said Sheriff Greg Champagne. "We should make it a point to maintain the spirit of the event year-round."



Hahnville residents were among those parishwide who held neighborhood parties in recognition of National Night Out.

Education is key for sheriff's deputies

Several more St. Charles Parish sheriff's deputies have headed back to school.

The effort is funded by the Eastern District of Louisiana Policing Grant, which pays \$220 toward tuition each semester, and the St. Charles Sheriff's Department, which pays the difference.

"The benefits to the officers and to the public are tremendous," said Sheriff Greg

Champagne. "I believe you can't have too much education. And I want to have the best educated sheriff's department around. I can't think of any negative drawbacks at all from this program."

The back-to-school program allows deputies to work toward a bachelor's degree in government with a minor in criminal justice, or an associate degree in criminal justice.

Classes are scheduled around officers' shifts, making it possible for them to attend.

Nicholls State University, the University of New Orleans and the participating sheriff's offices and police departments jointly run the program.

Since its start last year, 36 St. Charles deputies have attended classes. For each semester, they agree to stay one year with the department.

Sheriff offers free job fingerprinting

Does your job require you to be fingerprinted?

The License and Permit Office at the Sheriff's Department provides this service free of charge. Available Tuesday and Thursdays, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., fingerprints are offered to job-seekers, potential foster care parents, as well as those filing for concealed handgun permits.

The Sheriff's Department uses two methods of printing: traditional ink prints and a live-scan machine. AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) captures prints on a glass plate, which are compared with those on file statewide.

For more information on the free fingerprinting service, call 783-6237, ext. 238.

The St. Charles Sheriff's Department's License and Permit Office provides traditional ink prints or live-scan prints free to parish residents.



Send your gift home

Ardent supporters of the United Way of St. Charles Parish, employees of the parish Sheriff's Department increased their total contributions last year by 300%.

By designating the parish's United Way agency as the recipient of your pledge, you can ensure that neighbors like you will receive crucial services in their time of need.

Unless you designate a different parish, your gift will go to the parish in which the campaign is held.

Please, send your gift home to St. Charles Parish.



United Way

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The St. Charles Sheriff's Department has jumped onboard the information superhighway. The department's site provides up-to-date information about the sheriff's department, the staff and services offered. In addition, visitors may register their bicycles or request vacation patrols. The web site is located at: www.stcharlessheriff.org